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1946 COMMUNITY FOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

NOT JUST ANOTHER CAMPAIGN...

A full scale community food preservation program is a MUST in 1946. It again plays an important part in the nationwide food preservation campaign. But this year it is related to something much bigger — the world-wide need for food. Other programs helping to allay that need are victory gardening, save the wheat, go easy on all cereals, conserve the fats, and prevent food waste.

We will be able to share more of the easy-to-ship products of high food value if we put up seasonal abundances of perishable foods for use in the nonproductive months. Use of the Community Food Preservation Center affords a safe, easy, companionable way to put up that food.

HERE ARE THE FACTS...

1. Taking the world as a whole, food is short.
2. The food preservation program, like the victory garden program, is as important in 1946 as at any time during the war. More food for more people in this "famine year" is their joint aim.
3. Full use of Community Food Preservation Centers will increase the winter food supply for many:

Families
School lunch programs
Welfare institutions and organizations

4. A Community Food Preservation Center provides:

Space and equipment for families having limited facilities for canning at home

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A place where all family members may work together for efficient conservation

Instruction in approved methods for inexperienced canners

A place where employed persons may can after working hours

A place where volunteers may, together, preserve seasonal abundances under specified conditions for school lunch programs and for relief

Facilities, in some cases, for dehydrating food and for preparing food for freezer lockers.

5. Every Community Food Preservation Center should:

Open up as early in the season as possible

Keep open as many hours in the week as possible in order to handle the greatest quantity of food and to accommodate the greatest number of people

Continue in full operation until all late garden products are preserved.

6. A Community Food Preservation Center may be:

A building equipped with steam line, steam retorts, electric sealers for tin cans, and other permanent equipment, or

A church or club kitchen or home economics laboratory having stoves and running water and equipped with pressure canners and other standard food preservation equipment.

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7. Every Community Food Preservation Center should have:

A trained supervisor to direct its operations

Experienced workers to assist patrons

Suitable equipment in good working order

A community-wide committee to sponsor and to arrange for publicity throughout the season.

IT'S A COMMUNITY JOB

Leadership and teamwork are the key-notes of a successful Community Food Preservation Program. This program, like all civic enterprises, needs a sponsor and a publicity committee. It may need help in raising funds. It needs the backing of educational groups. Both men's and women's civic groups have a part to play.

There's a community job to do to make sure that everyone knows of the existence of a local canning center and the advantages of using its facilities. (See section "Build on Experience of Others.")

Many groups have given excellent leadership and have acted as sponsors of the program in other years, and are ready to lend their support again. Among these are victory garden committees, nutrition committees, parent-teacher associations, church groups, civic clubs, women's clubs, press and radio groups, and others.

Sources of technical advice, and of both State and local leadership are:

State agricultural extension service
State PMA office of the USDA

State dept. of education, vocational division

State farm security office

The efforts of the groups that cooperate in any one community will be most effective if coordinated by an over-all steering committee.

POINTERS FOR SUPERVISORS

The Center should be put on a self-supporting basis in order to assure its continued operation. In the experience of many Centers this can best be accomplished by:

WORKING FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTION

Encourage maximum use of Center by schools, welfare groups, and clubs as well as families.

Urge patrons to make appointments in advance for use of the Center.

Schedule patrons in an orderly fashion. Use equipment to full capacity each day.

Plan the best sequence for handling produce to make the maximum use of equipment.

Feature special days for canning only one product (corn day, peach day, tomato day) when it is in abundance.

Use labor saving devices, such as pea shellers, cherry pitters, apple peelers, slicers, dicers, etc.

Use tin cans to speed production. Keep the number of different can sizes used in any one day to the minimum.

Streamline as many operations as possible by assigning both paid and volunteer personnel to specific duties.

WORKING FOR A GOOD QUALITY PRODUCT

Accept and process only products of good quality.

Follow accepted methods of preparation.

Use only standard and approved time and temperature tables for processing. (See publications listed under title "For Your Information.")

Follow approved methods for operating the equipment.

Cool products promptly, and do not box or store until thoroughly cool.

Maintain good sanitation practices.

PLANNING FOR OVERHEAD COST

Save on costs and build up an expense fund. One or more of the following ideas may help accomplish this:

Reduce purchase price on containers by ordering in carload or half-carload lots according to need and availability. (See equipment prospects below.)

Make service charge per can over and above the cost of the can.

Charge each family a nominal fee for the privilege of using the Center on a daily or seasonal basis.

When volunteers process food for school lunch, welfare, and overseas relief, solicit contributions from civic organizations and clubs to pay for cans and service charges.

Charge small rental fee for use of labor saving devices.

Enlist volunteers as assistants in the Center to cut down on overhead cost.

CANNING EQUIPMENT OUTLOOK

TIN CANS

Supplies of tin and steel have been critical, but insofar as materials are available, tin cans for preserving perishable foods will be delivered. All orders for tin cans from community canneries or individuals canning foods that are not to be sold are given the same preference rating as commercial processors. Orders should be placed early by prospective buyers.

PRESSURE CANNERS.

Pressure canners are available. There is no guarantee, however, that all orders will be filled promptly owing to the shortage of critical materials. Communities that plan to set up small centers will want to order pressure canners of at least 14 or 18 No. 3 can capacity.

RETORTS AND CAN SEALERS

Manufacturers of community-sized retorts, can sealers, and other equipment used in Centers, report a fair supply on hand.

GLASS JARS AND CLOSURES: JAR RINGS

The following information will be helpful in case tin cans are not available and it is necessary to can in glass in the community center:

Supplies of glass jars and closures are expected to be sufficient to meet home-canning needs for the current season. Closures should be purchased early to give manufacturers an indication as to production needs.

No shortage of jar rings is expected. Quality is expected to be better than in the last few years, because the use of some natural rubber is now permitted.

SUGAR FOR CANNING

Consumers should be urged to make the fullest possible use of cannning sugar, as supplies are still short. A good way to stretch cannning sugar is to follow the wartime rule of 1 pound of sugar to every 4 quarts of finished fruit.

HOME CANNING

The Office of Price Administration has announced that canning sugar will be made available by the validation of two special stamps in Ration Book No. 4. The special ration book now being issued to veterans and infants and as replacements for lost books will include the stamps validated for sugar. Current information on the validation of sugar stamps is available in local papers, over the radio, and from District OPA Offices.

CANNING FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

Schools wishing to can fruits and to make preserves for the school lunch program should apply to their District OPA Office for the amount of sugar they need. The application should be made on OPA Form R-1340, which may be obtained

from all District OPA Offices. More than one application may be made.

The school must make the application to OPA for canning sugar whether:

1. It uses its own canning facilities
2. It uses the facilities of the Community Food Preservation Center
3. School lunch sponsors or other groups process in community centers foods that are donated to or purchased by the school.

BUILD ON EXPERIENCE

Chain telephone calls made by nutrition committee members and their friends proved an effective way of giving county-wide publicity to one new community canning center prior to its opening. Each member of the committee called five persons about the canning center, and asked each person in turn to call five others, and request them to continue the chain calls. The committee also featured the advantages of the Center in posters, and in announcements in the newspaper, over the radio, and in schools, churches, and motion-picture theaters. These information media were used repeatedly throughout the preservation season.

A school-lunch canning committee made up of representatives of all the women's organizations in the town, appointed the local home economics teacher as chairman. She supervised the work of volunteers from the various organizations two afternoons each week, when food donated by families in the community was canned in the vocational-agriculture cannery.

Thirty-five volunteers and the head cook of a school (with the cooperation of agriculture boys and home economics girls) put up over 1,500 cans of food in the local community canning center last summer, for use in their school lunch program this year. Home economics classes also made bread-and-butter pickles, jelly, and jam for this lunchroom.

In many schools the school-lunch department operates a cannery. Patrons who can meat and vegetables there, under the supervision of the school-lunch manager, leave a portion of the canned products to be served in school lunches.

Canning caravans have been used in some communities to interest women in increased food preservation. As demonstrations on home-canning methods are given in these "mobile kitchens," the group also is invited to take advantage of the facilities of the community canning center.

A local nutrition committee conducted an all-summer canning project last year with these results: A total of nearly 3,000 quarts of food was canned, and over 3,000 pounds of cabbage, root vegetables and apples were stored in a specially-built "cave" -- all to be used for the school lunch program. This is the way the committee carried out its well-laid plan: First, the lunchroom manager recommended the amount of different kinds of food to can. Then the committee divided the town into nine sections, and a chairman was appointed for each section. Each chairman called on families in her section early in the season, asking if they would plant extra rows of vegetables to donate for school lunch program. As the food that was promised was ready, the section chairman was notified, and she in turn notified the committee chairman and the canning supervisor. The canning was done in the Community Food Preservation Center, by volunteers from among those who donated the food.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Two publications useful to supervisors, managers, and workers on the staff of the Community Food Preservation Center are available free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.:

MP-544 Community Canning Centers

MP-588 Instructions on Processing for Community Frozen - Food Locker Plants.

